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Consolidation of the regime established by the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)

Letter dated 4 December 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to write to you concerning the important outcome of the eighteenth regular session of the General Conference of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (OPANAL), held in Havana, Cuba, on 5 and 6 November 2003. In that connection, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the document entitled "Havana Declaration" (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 66.

(*Signed*) Bruno Rodriguez **Parrilla**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Havana declaration

We, the Member States of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), on the occasion of the Eighteenth Regular Session of the General Conference held in Havana, Cuba, on 5 and 6 November 2003,

Reaffirm that the mere existence of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to the survival of humanity. We therefore believe in the need to advance towards the primary objective of nuclear disarmament and attainment of the comprehensive elimination and prohibition of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction from the face of the Earth as soon as possible.

Express our conviction that achieving the objective of eliminating and prohibiting nuclear weapons forever requires firm political will on the part of all States, particularly those States possessing nuclear weapons.

Underscore that any assumption by nuclear-weapon States concerning unspecified possession of nuclear weapons is incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime in all its aspects and with the broader objective of maintaining international peace and security.

Express our concern regarding the genuine possibility that new approaches in which a wider role is given to nuclear weapons as part of security strategies can lead to the development of new types of nuclear weapons and arguments in favour of their use.

Highlight the importance of multilateral diplomacy in the subject of disarmament, including nuclear disarmament and associated issues of international security. In this context, we recognize the important role the United Nations plays in the subject of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and we reiterate our commitment to adopting measures to strengthen that role.

In this context, we:

Reiterate our satisfaction that, following the ratification by the Republic of Cuba, the Zone of Application established in conformity with the Treaty of Tlatelolco is fully in force and, thereby, consolidates the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a densely populated region.

Reaffirm that the consolidation of the nuclear-weapon-free zone embodied in the Treaty of Tlatelolco is an important contribution of the region to international peace, security and stability and is a clear demonstration of the firm commitment of Latin America and the Caribbean to the cause of comprehensive and verifiable nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, in accordance with the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Emphasize the important role played by the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), and consequently are committed to strengthening it as an appropriate legal and political forum to ensure unqualified respect for the Treaty of Tlatelolco and to promote cooperation and coordination mechanisms with related international agencies linked to disarmament, as well as with other nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Consequently, as Member States of OPANAL, we assume a commitment to:

Promote the convening of a Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones, to be held as soon as possible, in order to support the common objectives established in these treaties and examine possible forms and means of cooperation.

Appeal to the States possessing nuclear weapons to provide full guarantees to all the States members of nuclear-weapon-free zones that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.

Promote the strengthening of the integrity of the statute of denuclearization provided for in the Treaty of Tlatelolco by requesting a review of the declarations that were formulated by the nuclear powers Parties to Protocols I and II for possible withdrawal or modification.

Strengthen national nuclear control and verification systems to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear material.

Continue working in the sphere of competent international agencies to strengthen and supplement current international laws in the field of security and liability measures that are applicable to the transporting of radioactive material and hazardous wastes that will contribute to preventing the radioactive contamination of the marine environment in the Treaty's Zone of Application.

Havana, 6 November 2003
(Adopted by acclamation at the 102nd Session held on 6 November 2003)